



# Maricopa County

Planning and Development Department

## AD HOC TASK FORCE REPORT

With the direction of the Board, an ad hoc task force committee was formed to review the service level and processes of the department. At the invitation of the County Manager, 26 key stakeholders comprised of business owners, engineers, architects, attorneys and project managers participated in a kick-off meeting on August 26, 2013. There was active, open discussion of the department's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Based on the discussion items, four (4) subcommittees were formed—Drainage Review, Customer Service/Information Gathering, Permitting/One Stop Shop and Regulatory Reform. The subcommittee members, along with assigned staff, met on a biweekly basis starting in September through November 2013. In the first meeting, each group identified particular topics or areas to be explored for improvement. Key staff was assigned to record and publish minutes and to provide current process information, reference material, organizational history and any other support needed by the team.

Through the intense efforts of the subcommittee members and staff, a total of 22 improvement initiatives were identified. All of the final initiatives are supported by staff. Where possible, initiatives have been implemented. For initiatives requiring additional financial resources or time for operational coordination, a phased implementation schedule has been proposed.

On December 4, 2013, the full task force reconvened to review the work of each subcommittee. Each subcommittee chairperson presented the background and recommended action items for consensus from the members. Outlined below is the high level summary of those specific recommended action items being submitted to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Drainage Review Task Force Subcommittee		
Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
1. Reduce burdensome requirement of detailed drainage studies in early entitlement phases.	a) Allow for a conceptual drainage plan option during land use review / entitlement process, i.e., Development Master Plans, Preliminary Plats, Special Use Permits. b) Revise applicable checklists and department directive(s).	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target for Implementation:</b> Dec. 31, 2013
2. Adjust drainage run-off coefficient to be less restrictive while maintaining safety standards.	a) After comparing other jurisdictions and conditions, the run-off coefficient was adjusted with the condition of a specific amount of free board included. This would be applicable for subdivisions. No change is deemed necessary on commercial properties.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target for Implementation:</b> Dec. 31, 2013



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## Drainage Review Task Force Subcommittee (Continued)

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
3. Incorporate temporary drainage easements into subdivision process.	a) Reviewed examples of how other jurisdictions approach temporary drainage easements. These easements may be recorded on a separate document rather than cited on the plat. This will allow for a simpler process after development of the subdivision. The language for this option is being drafted and reviewed.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target for Implementation:</b> Dec. 31, 2013

## Customer Service / Information Gathering Task Force Subcommittee

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
1. Improve accessibility to information / Public Records Requests.	a) Allow for inspection of files / records at time of request if available. b) Revise department directive. c) Develop fillable online form.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented</b>
2. Code Enforcement forms should be less intimidating and staff should be more accessible.	a) Reviewed formats from several other jurisdictions. The forms were revised, which included the Code Enforcement Officer's telephone contact on Notice and Summons as well as information on how to schedule a customer assistance meeting if needed.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target for Implementation:</b> Dec. 31, 2013
3. Enhance and promote customer survey tool.	a) Expanded customer survey groups & developed targeted questions to capture usable feedback on each phase of the process. b) Promote the survey through various avenues – website, emails, forms, etc. c) Include an option for customers to leave their contact information if they want to have staff follow up with them on questions or concerns.	Staff Concurrence / Pending cost estimate <b>Target for Implementation:</b> Feb. 28, 2014
4. Incorporate an option for mediation services for complicated, contentious Code Enforcement cases.	a) Phoenix School of Law to serve as a voluntary mediation option. This is a no cost service also utilized by City of Phoenix.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented</b>
5. A supervisor should be in the line of sight of the Service Counter in order to address questions and diffuse conflict.	a) Quotes to partition and create an office for the Customer Service Manager were received and then approved. The office was constructed and is now staffed for improved support.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented</b>



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## Permitting, Inspections & One Stop Shop Task Force Subcommittee

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
1. Adopt an Annual Facilities Permit Process (AFP)	a) Reviewed City of Phoenix model, developed process and initiated the Enhanced Regulatory Outreach Program (EROP) for necessary changes to the ordinance. b) Text Amendment TA2013005 initiated. Stakeholder meeting held 10/25/2013.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Pending EROP process</b>
2. Reorganization to have Planning & Development assume lead role over development areas of the One Stop Shop agencies.	a) Develop a work model proposal to be considered by BOS including organizational changes, personnel and financial impacts with operational benefits / gains. b) Consider interagency agreements where appropriate and how Info Technology, i.e., Accela Automation accessibility may improve coordination.	Under review and development <b>Target:</b> Jun. 30, 2014
3. Expand electronic plan review to include commercial projects and subdivisions.	a) Upgraded version of ProjectDox planned for June 2014. Unclear if this new version will support recommended expansion. b) Staff will continue exploring other system solutions. The focus is to consult with jurisdictions currently using an online digital submittal and review system. Once a system is identified, the financial implications and options will be considered.	Staff Concurrence / Under Review
4. Simplify approach to plan review process and improve consistency.	a) Management working with staff to adopt a more problem-solving, common sense approach. b) Whenever possible, the same reviewer should be assigned to projects. c) Several amendments have been initiated to reduce regulatory burdens: d) TA2013009 – allow for greater flexibility for residential setbacks e) TA2013004 – to exempt construction in existence prior to 1/1/2000 from permitting requirement unless visibly unsafe conditions are present f) TA2013006 – allow for greater flexibility in meeting parking requirements g) TA2013010 – revise hillside regulation to remove minor washes from designation.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented – Text Amendments proceeding through EROP process</b>
5. Reduce redundancy and improve coordination in the intake and distribution process.	a) Combined review comments from all reviewing disciplines are now being provided. Routing will be project specific as not all disciplines need to review each resubmittal each time. A customized resubmittal form listing the exact # of copies has been developed. b) Pre-Submittal or Pre-Application meetings are now available for complicated commercial and residential projects, i.e., schools, churches, etc. c) Incorporate providing redlines of plans along with review comments.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented – Note:</b> Capability and process for providing redlines of construction plans to be tested by June 30, 2014



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## Permitting, Inspections & One Stop Shop Task Force Subcommittee (Continued)

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
6. Host public workshops on the permitting process.	a) Develop ongoing workshops / presentations that target specific groups, i.e., residential, commercial, and online processes. Also use the workshops to share changes in the ordinances and processes	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target date for first session Feb. 2014</b>
7. Develop a process to handle retro-phasing of defunct subdivisions to foster development.	a) Prepared policy and procedures guideline for phasing of subdivision infrastructure permits.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented</b>

## Regulatory Reform Task Force Subcommittee

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
1. To modify the Special Use Process to make less cumbersome.	a) Minimum effective period for SUPs and Comprehensive Plan Amendments will be for 10 years. (Implemented). This is to serve as a stopgap until the option of submitting conceptual plans for rezoning and SUPs is available. b) Applicants should have the option of providing conceptual site plans for rezoning and SUP's submittals for entitlement determination. This action will lessen the substantial conformance issues that often result in minor or major amendments. c) SUP's should be for temporal uses. SUP categories of a permanent nature should be listed as a permitted or conditional use in certain zoning districts. This would include wireless communication facilities. Staff to review and initiate applicable text amendments.	Staff Concurrence / Staff to present proposed language for Text Amendment(s) to the P&Z Commission by July 2014 with recommendation to the BOS by Jan. 2015
2. Incorporate the Subdivision Regulations and Administrative Guidelines into a single, simplified document.	a) During the process of incorporating these regulations into the Zoning Ordinance, there are sections that could be reduced and streamlined for better understanding and cohesiveness.	Staff Concurrence / Staff to present proposed language for Text Amendment(s) to the P&Z Commission by July 2014 with recommendation to the BOS by Jan. 2015



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## Regulatory Reform Task Force Subcommittee (Continued)

Recommendation	Proposed Action(s)	Status
3. To allow for mixed uses within certain districts.	a) Staff to review the Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay Zoning District against that for other area jurisdictions to gauge any confusion created by differences and potential benefits to amending the ordinance so that the PAD allows for a customized mixed use project. b) Staff has initiated text amendment TA2012017 to allow for Mixed Use zoning districts.	Staff Concurrence / Staff to present proposed language for Text Amendment(s) to the P&Z Commission by July 2014 with recommendation to the BOS by Jan. 2015
4. Review Board of Adjustment (BOA) processes. Staff to defer to the BOA for statutory interpretation on applications for Variance.	a) The BOA bylaws to be reviewed. Staff reports to present Summary and Finding of Facts rather than a Recommendation. b) Allow the analysis to include the zoning district universe and not just the surrounding lots, i.e., a wash traversing four lots may be a physical hardship for all four of the lots. c) Revise Board of Adjustment (BOA) application materials eliminating any elaboration to be consistent with the statutory test and eliminate any elaboration on qualification of an unnecessary hardship or peculiar condition being created by the implementation of the Zoning Ordinance.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target date</b> for BOA public meeting workshop with review and advice by counsel to be held by July 2014.
5. Eliminate redundant Planning Zoning and Drainage plan reviews.	a) Staff is to establish two options from which the applicants may choose – Apply with a Precise Plan (current process) or with a Conceptual Plan. If entitlement is granted with a conceptual plan, precise plans will be required for permitting and would then be reviewed by both disciplines. If entitlement is granted with a Precise Plan, only a building safety review would be required at the permitting stage.	Staff Concurrence / If no text amendments are required, target date for implementation is July 2014.
6. Improve communication and provide staff recommendations earlier in the process.	a) Staff will provide tentative recommendation and stipulations and/or conditions at the pre-application meeting and with technical review comments.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Implemented</b>
7. Provide applicants with a better understanding of the process and timeframes.	a) The Planning Information & Application Packets will be revised to include flowcharts with timeline details or examples to help prepare applicants.	Staff Concurrence / <b>Target</b> date Jan. 31, 2014



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## **ACTION REQUESTED**

The action requested is to consider the contents, accept the report in whole or in part on behalf of the Ad Hoc Task Force and to provide guidance and direction to staff.